



Parish news

April 2026

For the Parishes of ASHBRIITLLE with GREENHAM, BATHEALTON, STAWLEY and KITTISFORD

Church Services**Thu 2nd April Maundy Thursday**

6.00pm The Last Supper with Communion The Lang Room, Rockwell Green

An informal meal with Holy Communion recalling Jesus at The Last Supper. Please book your place at welcome@westtone.org.uk**Fri 3rd April Good Friday**

2.00pm Reflective Hour at the Cross St. Margaret's, Thorne St. Margaret

A quiet hour of readings, music and stations that you can walk amongst, a space to allow for reflection on this important day.

Sun 5th April Easter Day

7.15am Sunrise Communion Yeancott Farm, Bathealton, TA4 2AW

A short outdoor Communion service followed by a hearty breakfast. All welcome, email welcome@westtone.org.uk with your dietary choice.

10.00am Easter Holy Communion Service St. Michael's, Stawley

10.00am All Age Easter Communion service Holy Cross, Sampford Arundel

10.30am Sung Eucharist Service All Saints', Rockwell Green

6.00pm Shanty Singers All Saints', Rockwell Green

Learn how to sing Sea Shanties with a friendly crowd.

Sun 12th April

10.00am All Age Communion Service St. Bartholomew's, Bathealton

10.30am Sung Eucharist Service All Saints', Rockwell Green

6.00pm The Pub Explorers The Martlet Inn, Langford Budville

A relaxed conversation over a drink, bring any question and join in

Sun 19th Apr

10.00am Holy Communion Service St. Margaret's, Thorne St. Margaret

10.30am Sung Eucharist Service All Saints', Rockwell Green

11.15am BCP Matins Service St. John the Baptist, Ashbrittle

6.00pm Prayer and Praise St. Margaret's, Thorne St. Margaret

A modern worship service with contemporary music, talk and prayer

Sun 26th Apr

10.30am Sung Eucharist Service All Saints', Rockwell Green

4.00pm Family@4 All Saints', Rockwell Green

A time for our youngest to play and learn from a helpful Bible story

6.00pm Choral Evensong with *Cantores Laeti* St. Nicholas', Kittisford

6.00pm Choral Evensong Service Holy Cross Sampford Arundel

Churchwardens and Clergy

Ashbrittle	Charles Doble, The Old Rectory, Ashbrittle, TA21 0LQ	01823 672365
	David Hanks, Manley House, Ashbrittle, TA21 0LE	01823 672436

Bathealton	Sarah Eustice, Oakwood, Spring Grove, TA4 1NL	01823 401248
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Kittisford	Annie Musgrove, Meadow Farm, Greenham, TA21 0JW	0753 031 0795
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Stawley	Penny Hare, Stawley Mill, Wellington, TA21 0HT	01823 672183
	Colin Haddrell, Tucks Farm, Stawley, TA21 0HS	07974 804990

Priest-in-Charge Reverend Andrew Barton, 2 White Oaks, Langford Budville, TA21 0RB
 Contacts: Home/Office - Phone 01823 924007 or 07795 699737 Email revdbarton@gmail.com

Curate Reverend Sarah Rowden - Contacts: Phone 07599 336105 Email revdrowden@gmail.com

Thought for the Month



Hello, I'm Sarah, and I've recently arrived as the curate for the Benefice of West Tone. My family and I live just outside Bathealton on our smallholding, where we are busy preparing the ground ready for this year's planting. I wonder if, like me, your window sills are

populated with seed trays and yoghurt pots, beginning to show signs of new life and growth?

Sowing seeds is a very particular act of faith, isn't it? You press something small and unremarkable into the soil, cover it over, and then wait. For a time, nothing seems to change. The soil looks just as it did before. Yet beneath the surface, something is beginning, something worth hoping for.

Working the land, even tending a small window box, requires a particular kind of hope. You plant not because you can see the harvest, but because you trust the promise hidden within the seed, and have faith that the sun and rain and life of the earth will work together with your efforts and bring forth green shoots. After a long, damp winter, that hope can feel fragile. And yet, we sow in the hope of spring; we live in the hope of new life.

Spring - a time for renewal

The Bible often uses this very journey - from winter to spring - as a picture of the renewal and restoration that we are promised in the love of Jesus. In the Song of Songs we hear the joyful invitation: "Arise my darling. See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come." (Song of Songs 2:11-13). It is a beautiful image of life returning to the earth; of spring, and colour and joy breaking through the mud of despair. It's a song that points us to the joy of Easter.

For many of us, life can feel like a long winter. We may carry grief, uncertainty, or simply life-weariness that makes holding onto hope, faith or trust in God difficult. For many of us, whilst the weather is getting warmer and days brighter, the gloom of the world's news keeps a cloud of fear over everything. Easter does not ignore the reality of darkness. In fact, it begins there.

The first Easter came at a time of fear and loss. Jesus' friends had watched him die, and with

him, it seemed, all their hopes for the future. The world must have felt very dark indeed. And yet, in that very place, something new was already beginning, something worth hoping for.

Christians believe that Easter is the moment when new life broke through in a completely unexpected way - that, in the resurrection of Jesus, God was doing something deeper and more lasting than anyone had imagined. Not simply turning a difficult situation around, but opening the door to a new kind of hope: a hope that is not defeated, even by death itself.

It is a hope that does not depend on everything in life going well. Rather, it is the quiet but steady belief that even in the darkest seasons, before we feel the warmth of spring, new life is possible - that what seems buried is not lost, and that God is at work in ways we cannot always see. Like seeds beneath the soil.

Perhaps that is why the small things matter so much. A kind word, a simple act of generosity, a moment of patience - these may seem insignificant at the time, but they are seeds sown in hope. They are signs that even in the challenging times of life, beneath the surface, something joyful is beginning, there is something worth hoping for.

Easter offers us an invitation: to pause, to reflect, and perhaps to be open to the possibility of new life in our own lives.

You would be very welcome to join us this Easter as we celebrate the hope found in Jesus - whether in church at a service, or perhaps by choosing to plant some seeds in your own garden; waiting for them, watching for them, hoping for the new life to come. It's a simple, practical act that can serve as a prayer. And as winter gives way to spring, and we remember and celebrate Jesus' death and resurrection this Easter, we hold hope that God delights to bring new life; that beneath the surface, something is beginning, something worth hoping for.

Revd Sarah Rowden

St. Batholomew's Church, Bathealton

The Annual Parochial Meeting will take place in
the Village Hall
on
Tuesday 19th May at 7.00 pm.

Front cover - the children of Stawley School gave a resounding shout of 'yes' when asked if they were enjoying their new classroom!

Photo - Maurice Stanbury

Quaker Meeting for Worship

Spiceland Quaker Meeting Uffculme
EX15 3AZ

*We Meet for Worship at Spiceland
every Sunday at 10.30am till 11.30am
also available on Zoom -
Meeting ID:865 5570 2735 Passcode:
498173
All are very welcome*

**The Light of Christ - The Light
that shines for all**

The resurrection, however literally or otherwise we interpret it, demonstrates the power of God, to bring life out of brokenness; not just to take the hurt out of brokenness but to add something to the world. It helps us to sense the usefulness, the possible meaning in our suffering, and to turn it into a gift. The resurrection affirms me with my pain and my anger at what has happened. It does not take away my pain; it still hurts. But I sense that I am being transfigured; I am being enabled to begin again to love confidently and to remake the spirit of my world.

Susan Jocelyn Burnell, 1989

Stawley Annual Parish Meeting 28th April 2026

The Annual Parish Meeting for residents of Stawley will be held in the Appley Pavilion at 7:30pm on the 28th April. The agenda will include an update on the provision of fibre broadband into the Parish, and an open forum for residents to bring their views of what we can do to improve life in the Parish. The agenda will be published on the 21st April on the website at stash.org.uk.

Village Oil Group

The next oil delivery is due on
8th April 2026

To place an order, please email:-
judy.milne@btinternet.com or contact
Judy or Michael Milne on 01823 672205 by the
Monday before the Wednesday delivery
New members always welcome



Bathealton Village Hall

POP UP CAFÉ

A friendly warm space: time to catch up with old friends or meet new ones.

The next 'Pop - Up' will be on:

Tuesday 5th May

We will serve food from 12 noon till 2.00 pm

Main course

Homemade: chicken and leek pie or
leek and lentil pie with oven baked chips
and sautéed cabbage

Sweet:

Home made : Rhubarb crumble and custard

Unlimited Cafetiere of Coffee or a selection
of teas - all for £9.00.

*You can reserve a place by calling Del on
07980 994082 or just pop in.*

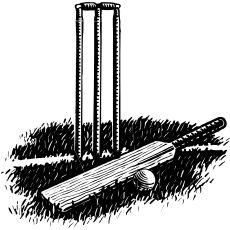
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Contacts:

Dave Stradling, Proprietor
Tel 07758 230434
or email davestradling5@gmail.com

Whiteoaks, Langford Budville,
Wellington TA21 ORB



Ashbittle, Stawley and Clayhanger Cricket Club

An excellent turn-out

We were really pleased with the turnout for the first club bingo night last month. A really enjoyable evening for everyone, and some great prizes won. A huge thank you to Suzette, Kristy and the team of helpers to get that night to the standard it was!

Let's keep our fingers crossed the weather

holds, and we get a great turnout for the always-brilliant St Georges Day breakfast which will raise funds for the Club and the Pavilion.

2026 Fixture Lists

The new season is almost here as we take a look at the fixture lists for both teams.

The First XI kick off their campaign with a short away trip to newly promoted Sampford Arundel. The Second XI begin their season a week later as they travel to Buckland St Mary in what is always a close contest.

A big season of cricket lies ahead with plenty of exciting fixtures to look forward to! We can't wait to get underway and see plenty of support throughout the summer.

Callum Hamer

Annual St George's Day Breakfast



Join us for Breakfast, and
enjoy watching the
players train ahead of the
2026 Season!

Sunday, 19th of April -
Appley Pavilion TA21 0HH
Breakfast from
9am - 12pm

All proceeds to go towards
Appley Pavilion and
Ashbittle Cricket Club

Fenton Farm Eggs



Gardening Club

The first event of the Gardening Year for the Club has, for the past few years, been a Bring and Share supper and Planning Session hosted at Cruck Barn by Pauline Wood. Once again, Club members wish to extend their warmest thanks to Norman and Pauline for their generous hospitality for allowing their beautiful property to be the venue for this pleasurable event. This year, the meeting took on a particular importance as Freda and Mile Parkinson, who had run the Club very diligently for eighteen months after Val, stood down at the end of 2025. Again, Club members expressed their appreciation for their very active support and leadership.

Val offered to act as Chair for the meeting to enable Mike and Freda to focus on other priorities. Needless to say, the main item on the agenda was to seek a new leader who would ensure the smooth running of the year's activities and provide copy for the Parish News. The Club welcomed a new member, Simone van der Linden from Bathealton, who immediately volunteered to be the person collating information for submission to the Parish News. The Club is extremely grateful for such willing support. Unfortunately, there were no such offers among members to take their turn in co-ordinating activities!

A different approach

Members supported the idea of a "Run your own Gardening Club" whereby the person leading a particular activity would do all the admin. necessary. Val has since prepared an 'Aide Memoire' for members detailing the tasks needed.

In the hope that this approach will work, the rest of the meeting was devoted to developing the year's programme of Visits to Specific Gardens and Visits to Member's Gardens, sometimes accompanied by a Bring and Share. 2026 is likely to be a very active and enjoyable year with some fabulous activities planned.

The Gardening Club has been running now for over twenty years and has been a source of much pleasure, lots of companionship and, not least, sharing plants, garden advice and contacts. All members hope that it will continue to be a significant activity in our Community.

Val agreed to organise the first garden visit of the season at the end of April (date still to be determined by the owners) to Greencombe Gardens, a paradise Woodland Garden overlooking Porlock Bay. The Garden is a treasure trove of rare and beautiful plants and is the proud custodian of four National Collections. The visit will commence with lunch in the historic Ship Inn at Porlock Weir.

New members

As always, new members are most welcome! If you would like sight of the Year's Programme, or would be interested in joining the April visit to Greencombe Garden, please contact Val by text or WhatsApp on 07969 110634.

Val Wall

Lunch Club

Our February lunch club was a little different from usual. The speaker did not arrive and later we received a contrite apology that he had the wrong date!

However, as ever, we discovered we have a resourceful group of would-be lunchers. Within minutes Martin Jacoby launched into a brief resume of the development of the human race and how we differ from animals. Martin never fails to astound us. Then Paul Jacques arrived with clarinet, saxophone, flute and recorder and entertained us off the cuff for the next half hour until Jackie White arrived with the lunch. Who needs to organise anything??

Next month, April 30th, we will be hearing from another regular luncher, Walter Longden. He writes - 'With over forty years experience in genealogy my passion for family history began with a single Victorian writing box inherited from my grandfather - a mystery still unravelling today. In my talk I will guide you through the essentials of starting your own research, from navigating official records to identifying key sources. I will also share a glimpse into fascinating ancestors and interesting people I have discovered along the way.'

If you would like to join us on April 30th at 12.00 noon, please let me know. Please note the date. This is the 5th Thursday in the month which might confuse some of us.

My contact details are - telephone 01823 672203 or email harlingdelia@gmail.com

Delia Harling



Coffee, Cake and Chat

Ashbrittle Village Hall

Saturday 18th April
10.00 - 12.00 noon

**Unlimited Coffee and Delicious Home Baked
Cakes available, for just £5.00.**

— THE —
GLOBE INN
APPLEY

**Celebrate Easter with a delicious
Sunday roast
on 5th April from 12-2pm.**

Sit back, relax and let us take care of the cooking.
Tuck into our delicious home-reared roast beef or pork, or a
veggie option, accompanied by all the trimmings.

£17 PER PERSON

**Enjoy a taste of India with
our special curry night
Thursday 23rd April 6-9pm**

Tuck into a mouth-watering
selection of lovingly handcooked dishes
specially made by our guest chef.

Check out our Facebook page to see the full menu & prices.

Booking is essential.

Pre-order by Sunday 19th April

Open

Wednesday to Saturday 12 noon - 11pm

Sunday 12 noon - 4pm

Food

Served from 12 noon - 2pm & 6pm - 9pm

📍 Appley, Stawley, Wellington, Somerset, TA21 0HJ

☎ 01823 673147

✉ stuardurston@hotmail.co.uk

📍 The Globe INN Appley

Check out our
Facebook page for
news of our
upcoming monthly
alfresco
music events

BOOKINGS NOW
BEING TAKEN FOR
EASTER SUNDAY
ROASTS &
CURRY NIGHT

Conversation Peace



Two friends within a meadow met
who hadn't known each other yet:
approached they both, the man, the ram,
no power, nor fear, no hidden scam.

There was no thought of mutton meat,
desires for chops were kept discreet,
two beings sensing harmony,
strange sheep-and-human unity:

their noses almost found a touch,
unnecessary in as much
their meeting spawned a bonding smile,
two creatures noting, for a while,

that both belonged to world of life,
though natures drew more fear and strife:
attractive sheep, unhandsome man,
together closing best they can,

acknowledged each, one skin, one fleece,
enjoyed their conversation peace.

Martin Perry

We trust that readers appreciate the author's poetic licence! Eds

News From Stawley School

This term has been an absolute blur with so much going on, but I'm pleased to say that we have finally moved into our new school - and it is amazing!

Most of the half-term holiday was spent shifting crates to and fro, emptying boxes, and moving furniture. It was one of the busiest holidays we've had, trying to get everything ready for when the children arrived on their first day in the new building. We did it though, and although there were still a few more boxes to unpack, everything was ready for the first day back.

The new school building is lovely. It feels

like there is so much more space (although a few extra cupboards wouldn't go amiss!) and I'm sure the children are quieter and calmer in class - although that might be the extra soundproofing that was put in!

As I'm sure you are aware, the builders are still on site with plenty of work to do. The children have really enjoyed watching the demolition of the old school. When the final part of Class 1 was pulled down, they gave the demolition crew a massive round of applause.

I didn't quite know how I'd feel about seeing the classroom I've worked in for over twenty years being pulled down. In some respects, it was a little sad, as the building held so many memories. However, we're now looking forward to creating new memories in our new building.

An Open Day planned shortly

It has been great to catch up with past pupils and parents and chat about the old school - there really are so many memories. We now look forward to opening the school up to the local community so you can all have a good look around. This will hopefully take place in the summer term, when the builders have moved off site and we have our school grounds back again. I will let you know the date and look forward to showing you around our lovely new building.

David Stirzaker

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Playing Truant

It was 1968. My launch into the teaching profession the previous year had been catastrophic. I failed my probationary year due to a horrendous combination of a broken engagement, (being jilted in favour of someone I thought was a friend); helplessly watching my mother having a devastating nervous breakdown; failing completely to manage my money so I was frequently cold and hungry; a Rachman type landlord who raised the rent after I redecorated a room because, and I quote, 'It's so much nicer now, it's worth more' and missing my college friends and academic life more than I could have imagined. Not to mention having a class of forty-six children in a classroom built for thirty, in a part of Birmingham that sprang up as a result of slum clearance, with no infrastructure to speak of. Oh, and an absolute old boot of a head teacher who would goad and provoke me at every turn. 'It's not the end of the world if you don't get married, Miss Silk'. Apparently, 'Miss Silk allowed her personal problems to impair her efficiency as a teacher.' It was rock bottom. But I was taken on by another primary school and made very welcome.

Life became easier. New friendships blossomed. I passed my probationary year and found a kindly, new landlady and lovely lodgings in Bournville, greeted every morning by the wonderful smell of chocolate. When another term began I happily made my way to the staff room. Everything changed. There was a tall, dark and yes, handsome man I'd never seen before. My knees gave way at the sight of him. I had to sit down as I seemed to have lost the ability to stand or even speak.

Moving on. Together we began writing and performing songs of gloom and doom, a la Leonard Cohen, accompanied on my guitar by the three chords I could play reasonably well; E minor, A and D. We played in nearly all the folk clubs in Birmingham except for The Boggery which was run by Jasper Carrot. He said to me, 'I'd like you to play at my folk club, Avril, but your songs are too so-and-so miserable.' I met him years later and reminded him of that but he'd forgotten.

The song writing flourished. And then one day we bunked off school. He probably rang in with a upset stomach and I rang in with a migraine and we took the train to London, me clutching my guitar and wearing a lilac paisley mini dress from C & A, with silk-lined medieval sleeves. ready to change the world. We went to Tin Pan Alley and inveigled our way into the offices of a handful of record producers, who tolerantly listened to what we had to say. I have an old reel to reel recording of those songs – a few are lovely; some are OK and a couple are truly cringe worthy. A particular lyric stands out in the latter category... She lived in a Gothic Cathedral/

with windows of bloodstained glass. Eek. I don't remember anybody being overwhelmed – no recording contracts were forthcoming - but I don't remember anybody being anything other than courteous and pleasant.

Before we took the train back to Birmingham we had one more task. We took a taxi to a Georgian town house, number three, Savile Row, the Apple headquarters, and handed in a cassette of our songs to Derek Taylor, the Beatles Press Officer. (We never heard from them, incidentally.) Our big adventure was almost at an end, but as we were walking away, the door opened and out came a tall man in a tan coloured Afghan coat, with wire glasses and shaggy hair, arm in arm with a tiny, beautiful woman with shiny, dark hair and a face like a flower. They smiled at us and we smiled at them and Yoko Ono and John Lennon went on their way. We took the train back to Birmingham, naively believing that nobody would have connected our absences. I am sure they did but our colleagues were too courteous to actually suggest that we had skived off for the day.

Avril Silk

News from the Parish News

Donations this month received from:

Adrian Ford

Helen and Tom Lock

Anonymous donors at the Village Shop

We also receive regular donations via Standing Order from:

Annie and Nick Bengé

AG & AJ Hill

Mike and Freda Parkinson

John and Angie Hannon

Many thanks for your kind donations. Donations may be left at Stawley Shop or sent directly to the Treasurer. Details inside back cover.

Andrew Millard, Treasurer

Bathealton Village Hall

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 28th April 2026

7.00 pm

All welcome

Mobile Library

at Greenham Bridge

Next visit: 21st April

9.50 - 10.10 a.m.

Solomon's Seal - a favourite of mine



Polygonatum - knees up in the springtime! Ever since I started gardening professionally, these plants have fascinated me. I've always been drawn to architecturally interesting plants, particularly if they are understated, colour wise. *Polygonatum*, or 'Solomon's Seal' is without doubt, one of those

plants. In so many old, over-grown and neglected gardens, clear away the brambles, nettles and other undergrowth, and they will spring up

So, to clarify the rather frivolous, corny sounding title, *Polygonatum* means 'many knees' in ancient Greek, referring to the numerous nodes and joints of the underground root (or rhizome). The common name, 'Solomon's Seal' remains obscure in origin but often thought to refer to the neat, circular scar left on the rhizome after the current year's stem dies back in the autumn.

This well-known hardy herbaceous perennial with its robust rhizomes, rapidly sends up strong, wiry stemmed, arching shoots in the spring, seemingly often appearing overnight. The rhizomes grow just below the surface of the soil, often forming large, congested mats, one of the reasons it can persevere in neglected gardens! These can be easily lifted, broken into smaller sections and replanted in a new site, not too deeply, and the soil is enriched with leaf mold or mature compost.

It is a member of the *Asparageaceae* family with some sixty or so species spread across the northern hemisphere and many being concentrated in Asia. It is a complicated family, ever evolving, alongside other very closely related families, described by botanists and growers as a 'work in progress'. Strangely, many are edible and are often used as 'famine foods' in rural parts of Asia; they are also used in many traditional medicines.

These are woodland plants by nature but will tolerate a wide range of conditions. But they are best grown in leaf mold rich, semi-shaded spots, associating with other, predominantly spring flowering woodlanders such as *Trilliums*, *Cyclamen*, *Tellima grandiflora*, *Epimediums* and *Podophyllum*. The taller, even more robust forms can be grown through a dense ground covering of Ivy or *Vinca* or amongst shrubs, so tough is it when established. The only downfall can be the years when it is plagued and stripped by the larvae

of Sawfly which will reduce it to a bare skeleton .

In wet springs, some slug damage can occur on the leaves and new growth but rest assured that the parent plant will always bounce back the following year. As with all woodland plants, an occasional dressing of leaf mold or very well-rotted compost will help keep its roots cool and conditioned during the summer months. Division of named varieties is a good way to increase stock. They can also be grown from the seeds found in the berries but these require cleaning and exposure to winter conditions, sometimes taking two years to germinate.

There are so many fascinating but obscure species that I could list but these are maybe more in the region of the collector and less in the ornamental garden; the ones I would certainly recommend for all gardens, particularly ones with a cooler, leafier aspect include the following:

Polygonatum odoratum: the archetypal 'Solomon's seal'. This plant has a wide distribution range from across Europe into Asia with its neat, pleated leaves and green-tipped flowers hanging from the leaf axils. The blooms are scented and a few cut stems make an excellent display. Double (*P. odoratum* 'flore pleno') and variegated forms (*P. odoratum* 'Silver Wings') are available along with the very choice, harder to find *P. odoratum* 'Red stem'.

Polygonatum x hybridum: a vigorous cross between *P. multiflorum* and *P. odoratum*. Some very tall, robust, un-named forms of this exist at Knightshayes, growing up to nearly 4ft (1.20m) tall. Also highly recommended is *P. x hybridum* 'Betsburg' with its richly coloured young stems and leaves, varying from chocolate brown to purplish. It is named after an area in the Black forest where it was originally found. *P. x hybridum* 'Grace Barker' (*variegatum*) is an old variegated, striped leaf form.

Polygonatum verticillatum: A widely distributed species found across Europe, Asia and into the Himalayas with much regional variation; the taller more willowy forms from Asia and the shorter, more rugged forms found across Europe into Siberia. The flowers are generally white/green but *P. verticillatum* 'Roseum' has a red flush in the stems which colour the flowers with a pink blush.

Polygonatum curvistylum: A delicate, elegant species from western China with narrow leaves and flowers all blushed with a warm shade of pinky purple, growing 2ft (70cms) in height and preferring a cooler, moister, sheltered spot.

John and Julie Ridgley



COME AND CELEBRATE AVRIL'S EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY!

**ASHBRITTLE VILLAGE HALL
SATURDAY, APRIL 4th 3pm - 10pm**

A chance to relax and chat to friends and neighbours, with light refreshments.

Tea, sandwiches and cake at 4pm

*Evening buffet
with cold snacks, wine and soft drinks.
Contributions (ready-cooked, please) welcome.*

RSVP A rough idea of who is coming, and when, will be appreciated.

Time Marches On...

Maurice and I are no exception! We have a really good time bringing the Parish News to you every month, but we are getting older and it would be wonderful to think that there is somebody out there who would be interested in joining with us to help produce the magazine.

If you are at all interested, please get in touch with either of us and we can talk to you about what's involved - drop us an email: ashparishnews@gmail.com or give us a call on either 01823 672131 or 672216.

Avril Silk

Spring Coffee Morning

and

Bring and Buy

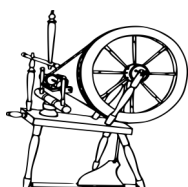


Thursday 16th April

10.00 – 12 noon

The Old Rectory, Stawley
TA21 0HP

In aid of Stawley Church funds
(Cash only)



Spinning and Woolcraft Group

A twice-monthly get-together at a member's house for textile crafting, chat and a cuppa

Perhaps you would like to learn to spin with us?
Or bring along your knitting, crochet or other needlework project

All welcome

If you would like to join us, please contact me and I will add you to the mailing list.

Next Sessions

Tuesdays: 7th and 21st April
5th and 19th
at 2.30pm

Contact Pauline on 01823 672222 or
email pjw200355@gmail.com



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1ST & 3RD WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

1ST & 15TH APRIL

10AM—12.30PM

IN AID OF CHURCH RESTORATION FUND



MORAG BERTHON MEMORIAL PLANT SALE

at HELTINGS FARM
(TA4 2AP)



SATURDAY
16 MAY 2026
Gates open: 2.30 pm

TEA AND CAKES for sale
MUSIC: *the Wiveles*

**Parking in the field, location: [///qualify.issued.bogus](http://www.qualify.issued.bogus) (what3words)
All raised funds go to Bathealton's St. Bartholomew's church**

A Special Tribute: The Morag Berthon Memorial Plant Sale

Since 1998, Morag Berthon was the heart of Bathealton's gardening community, hosting the annual sale at her beloved home, Hellings.

To honour her incredible legacy, we are holding a Memorial Plant Sale on Saturday, 16th May. This special event serves as Morag's final contribution to St. Bartholomew's Church - a parting gift from a woman who spent decades nurturing both her garden and her community.

Help us make her final sale bloom

To make this tribute a success, we are asking for donations of plants, seedlings, or shrubs. Whether it's a division from your garden or a tray of herbs, every contribution will help.

Drop-off: You are welcome to drop off plants at Hellings Farm anytime between now and the sale. There are signs at the bottom of the drive for plant donations. Alternatively, please get in touch with me (Simone) to arrange a pickup/drop-off at 07495 670743.

Let's gather for one last afternoon of tea, music, and greenery to say thank you to Morag.

Simone van der Linden

Make it a day



**with a
Safari Supper
at various venues around
Kittisford**

16th May starting at 6.00 pm

***Three venues and three courses in some
lovely rural settings.***

***More details in next month's
magazine.***

Stawley School - Circa 1983 (see the photograph on the back cover)

BACK ROW

Peggy Wotton MBE (Greenham Post Office), Bill Wotton (Ditto), Mrs Bryant (Meadlands), Mr Bryant (Ditto), Reg Herbert (One of the saviours of the School),
Mrs Marshall (Rectory Road, Ashbrittle), Di Willis (Chair of the Governors), Sam Owen (On J.O's arm),
John Owen (Appley Court Farm),
Graham Henson (Court Place Farm), Bindy Owen (Appley Court Farm), Sue Ridgeway, George Nichols (Briars Cottage), Emily Nichols (below George),
Jean Enticott (Dishwell Farm), Nora Rush (Tracebridge), Fiona McKinney (Ashbrittle), Cassidy Krezma (Creedys), Sean Ridgeway, Caroline Ridgeway.
Can't remember – help? Can't remember – help? Jennifer Henson (Court Place Farm), Margaret Enticott (Meriden), Sarah Hill?, Mrs Bowerman (Headteacher),
Linda Westcott (Old School House), Mark Westcott (standing), Carl Westcott (being held),
Eileen Cooke (North Haywood).

SECOND ROW

Mrs Rowcliffe (School Cook), Angie Hannon (Langs), George Hannon, Rev. John Fowler, Hilary Nichols (Briars Cottage), Sharon Marshall (on Hilary's knee),
Janet Greenslade (Kittisford), Sarah Jane Greenslade (on knee), Mrs Hill, David Hill (on knee),
Lee Marshall, Nathan Hill, Helen Enticott, Poppy Hannon,
Toby Nichols, Tracey Greenslade, Maureen Bryant, Gavin Dalwood (behind Tracey).

FRONT ROW

Claire Palmer, Alistair Henson, Christopher Cooke, Mary Owen, Christine Enticott, April Hannon.

*Names provided by John and Angie Hannon - help with those not identified and any corrections/ amendments would be gratefully received. Contact by email: jth@gmail.com or call 01823 672248

Ashbrittle Art and Craft Group

We hold a monthly get-together as a self-directed group to do whatever 'arty' or 'crafty' project takes your fancy

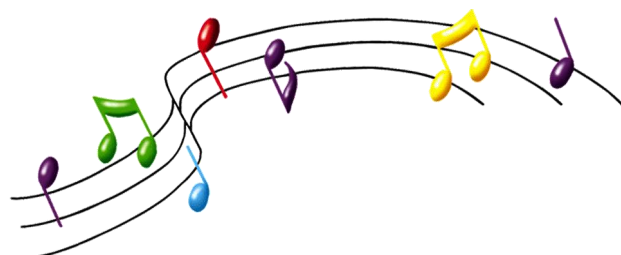
Painting and Drawing - Mosaics - Textiles Crafts - etc.

Come and meet some local art and craft enthusiasts, see what's going on and tell us about your favourite craft. We meet at a member's house. Arrangements will be confirmed in advance, via a monthly reminder email

Next meetings:
9th April and 14th May
2.00 - 4.0 pm

If you are interested in joining us, contact me by email below to be added to the mailing list:

Pauline pjw200355@gmail.com



Please join us on
Sunday April 26th at 6 pm
St Nicholas Kittisford

Cantores Laeti choir will be singing
Choral Evensong

Walmisley: Magnificat and
Nunc Dimittis in D
Sanders: Preces and Responses
Walford Davies: O Sons and Daughters

Refreshments after the service
Collection to support the work of the church

VILLAGE LUNCH CLUB
 ASHBITTLE VILLAGE HALL
 Thursday, April 30th at 12 noon
 WALTER LONGDEN

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Fibre Broadband Project Update

We certainly were not expecting to ditch the waterproofs and thermals, but no one in the team is complaining. It definitely feels like spring now, fingers crossed.

While our focus of late has been in Clayhanger where we have made rapid progress and will soon be complete, there have been various developments elsewhere in our build area, lots being positive depending on your perspective.

Tracebridge

Let's start with Tracebridge! Around four years ago Openreach installed their overhead fibre through Tracebridge to serve Tracebridge House and York Cottage under a FTTP On Demand order, where the end user pays for the build cost (often running to considerable sums). For whatever reason, Openreach declined to enable the rest of the village despite their infrastructure being in place to do so...

Roll on to last month, and Openreach were struggling to re-light the existing fibre at the school, and so scheduled some roadworks to find and fix this "fault". In completing those repairs, it also cleared whatever faults prevented their remaining CTBs in Tracebridge from being made live for the last four years... the end result is Tracebridge now has Overhead FTTP fibre available to order from Openreach based ISPs; it's not an automatic upgrade so contact your ISP to explore your options.

From our perspective, this does stop our build to these properties, but there is some relief too as this was never a simple geography for us to tackle and let's be honest, we have plenty of other challenges! It was inevitable that with their infrastructure in-situ, Openreach would serve these properties one day. But we are pleased that they can get a decent broadband connection, even if it is not from us!

In true Openreach logic, this doesn't extend to Briars Cottage or the surrounding farms who will remain in our build plans to be connected.

Kittisford Barton Area

Having completed a number of Directional Drill shots last month, we'll be returning here once we've completed works in Clayhanger to build the long distance stretches in the area and complete the work to each property signed up. There is a fair amount of work to do, but we'll be in touch with those properties as we progress. Please do bear with us.

Bathealton

As the ground begins to dry (a long process here) we will look to continue our build out from Woodlands Farm to the wider area and revisit

how we also extend towards Poleshill. Timings will depend on the ground conditions but we'll keep you posted as things here start to move forward.

Appley Cross

We've spent a lot of time with the Appley Cross puzzle, lots of moving (and stationary) pieces at play, not least the old school demolition, the replacement sewerage works (currently on hold for eight weeks), water mains, drains and multiple different landowners. Once you then add in the terrain and the T Junction, if you see us stood in the road scratching our heads, you will understand why!

During the Easter school holidays we'll aim to complete our works on the school site and this will allow connections to the nearby properties and the Community Shop. The complex part of the puzzle is how to link this work with the current network.

In the last seven years, we've met and worked with every landowner "type" in many different communities, and to date we've been pretty successful in navigating the minefield of neighbourly relations with impartiality and our single-focus; friend and foe, families, supporters and doubters, young and old, locals and newbies (only lived here for twenty-five years), absorbs every page of every Parish News or leaves the magazine on the side untouched each month!

In some communities it has been one or maybe two landowners who unlock the access to everyone in a community, elsewhere we have had to get multiple sequences of landowners to agree a single workable route. As we always say, whether it is five metres across a corner or five hundred acres, both are equally critical.

By allowing the fibre network across their land each landowner directly benefits from those who come after as well as those already connected and that equality, selflessness and gratitude is ultimately the success of our rural Fibre Network build. On occasion it can even bring neighbours together with common purpose not just better connectivity, but we've not yet cracked world peace - sorry!

When every section of a community recognises and directly benefits from having this infrastructure in place, much like the water and electric utility infrastructure, once installed it is there for the greater benefit of all and unlike a piecemeal approach we try to ensure we include every property as we go; even if they only connect for the minimum twelve months, the infrastructure is built below your field, garden, gateway or driveway and sits ready for the future, whatever that future may bring.

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TECHNOLOGICAL

Minutes of the Stawley Parish Council Meeting
held at Appley Pavilion at 7:30 pm
on the 2nd March 2026

Finance The current bank balance is £2,923 and the Unity Bank balance is £10,319.29

An invoice of £352 (incl VAT) for a new battery for the Shop defibrillator was accepted.

Planning

35/26/0002 - Demolition and erection of enlarged free-range poultry (egg-laying) unit with associated works at Newlands House, Thorne St Margaret Road, Greenham, Wellington. This extensive application had been studied by the Chairman prior to the meeting. The site of the new shed is such that it will not be very visible from any public area so the only considerations were traffic to and from the site and the possibility of exacerbation of the present flooding problems on the Greenham to Cothay road.

The Council agreed to support the granting of permission with the proviso that the flooding mitigation should be checked by the Lead Local Flood Authority and consideration be given to the construction of a buffer pond to take runoff in exceptional rainfall events.

Greenham Cottage field. The planning officer has confirmed that he has issued an enforcement notice.

Hedge appeal. This appeal is still outstanding. The Planning Inspectorate 'lost' the original appeal but still have it on their file with the rest of a large backlog. Somerset Council continue to chase them for an answer.

Reports from Members

Roads –. The issue of hedges growing into the road has been investigated.

Section 52 of the Highways Act 1980 requires landowners to cut back if required to do so by Somerset Council. Locations with overgrown hedges will be reported to Somerset Council.

Footpaths – The footpath sign by Greenham Cottage has been delivered to the owners but not put up. The Council will arrange for this to be done by a contractor.

Report from Somerset Councillor. Dave Mansell reported that the enforcement within Somerset Council was still catching up. The Somerset Council budget was in a state of flux but still in the red and requiring assets to be disposed of in the current year to provide for running costs.

Dates of Meetings in 2026

·The Annual Parish Meeting must take place be-

tween 1st March and 1st June. This year it will be held on the 28th April at 7:30pm in the Pavilion. There will be a meeting of the Council just prior to this at 7:00pm.

The following meeting will be on the 2nd June.

Any Other Business

There has been some vandalism in Conyore Wood in Greenham so a careful watch will be kept on the area.

There has been some fly-tipping on the road between the Meadowmere corner and Devon border.

Meeting closed at 8:47pm

Paul Musgrove (Chairman)

Rainfall Statistics (inches)
January 2026

2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
2.52	6.85	4.41	5.94	7.40

You won't be too surprised to read the first month of the year has been the second wettest January since 2010. Only January 2014 produced more rain - 8.05 inches.

Val Coots



Easter crafts and games

Thursday 16 April

2.30-4 p.m.

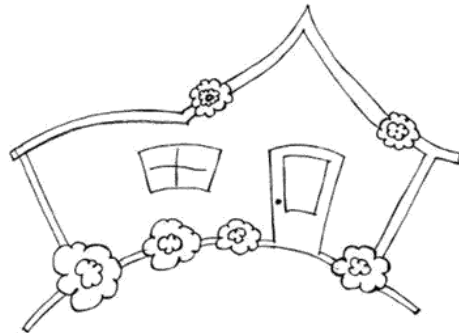
All Saints' Church, Rockwell Green

Free

Children welcome with a parent or carer

The poster features a light blue background with a white bunny on the left, a yellow star with the word 'Free' in red, and several colorful Easter eggs at the bottom. In the background, there are silhouettes of crosses on a hill.

Stawley Community Shop & Tea Room



Opening hours

Week days opening 8.00am to 5.00 pm
except

Wednesday 8.00 am to 1.00 pm

Good Friday 8.00 am to 12.00 noon

Easter Monday 8.00 am to 12.00 noon

Saturday 8.00 am to 12.00 noon

Sunday 9.00 am to 11.00 am

The Tea Room will close 30 minutes before shop closure

The Post Office is here every Thursday 11.30 am to 1.30 pm

Contact us on 01823 674361 or shop@stawleyshop.com

Treasurer needed for Stawley Community Association (SCA)

The SCA is the organisation that has overall responsible for the Community Shop and Tea Room. We are currently looking for a treasurer to replace our current treasurer who has worked incredibly hard at setting up the Community Shop finance systems and accounts. Lesley would like to step down once the first full set of accounts have been completed, which is very soon. You don't have to be an accountant, but some experience with book keeping and/or being a treasurer for an organisation would be helpful.

Now the shop is well established as a community shop, we meet about every two months as many of the day-to-day decisions and running of the shop is done by the Shop Coordinator. We are a friendly bunch of people, and it is interesting to know how the shop functions and to be part of its current and future development.

If you are interested then please give Nigel our Chair a ring on 07795 664043.

**Look forward to seeing you soon at
Stawley Community Shop and Tea Room**

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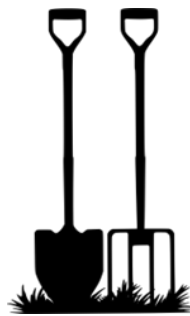
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Defibrillators in our Community

Would you know what to do if someone in your household had a Heart Attack/Cardiac Arrest?

Sudden cardiac arrest is a leading cause of premature death. In cardiac arrest the heart's steady rhythm is often replaced by disorganised electrical activity called ventricular fibrillation (VF). The sooner VF is treated by an electrical shock (defibrillation), the greater the chance of the person's life being saved. Immediate action by members of the public can save many lives.

DIAL 999 FIRST

But, there are four defibrillators within our community which are easy to use with verbal and visual instructions and available to anyone. They are permanently located at these places and can be found using the // What3words codes below.

Ashbrittle Village Hall, on the outside wall.
blurts/flats/crouching

Bathealton Village Hall, on the outside wall.
relatives.widgets.rolled

Kittisford, New House Farm, on the wall opposite the church.
bonkers.regime.lyricist

Stawley Village Shop, on the outside wall
messaging.servers.quaking

Each one can be removed and taken to where it is needed. **These are all accessible 24 hours a day and no access codes are required.**

Editorial Policy

Please note that the views expressed in this magazine are the responsibility of the individual author(s) and are not necessarily the views held by the editors of the Parish News.

Local information

Police Beat Team PCSO Brianna Whelan
Tel: 07761 405460 or email:
brianna.whelan@avonandsomerset.police.uk

Parish Councils

Ashbrittle - Chairman Charles Doble 01823 672365 or 672618
email: *charles@greenandcarter.com*

Bathealton - Chairman Philip Broad 07584 657106
email: *philip.broad1@outlook.com*

Stawley - Chairman Paul Musgrove 0793 934 7891
email: *stawleypc@stash.org.uk*

Somerset Councillors

Cllr Dave Mansell – 01984 623823 or email:
dave.mansell@somerset.gov.uk

Cllr Gwil Wren – 01823 400657 or email:
gwil.wren@somerset.gov.uk

Community Halls

Appley Pavilion and Recreation Field

– to book, call 01823 672266 or email:-
Lucy Williams *info@appleypavilion.co.uk* or book
online at <https://appleypavilion.co.uk>

Ashbrittle Village Hall

– to book, ring Pat Gainey on 01823 672760
or 07713 276656

Bathealton Village Hall

– to book, ring Tilly Willis on 07961 970743

Local Groups

Stawley under Fives at the Appley Pavilion.

Becky Alder Pre-schools Manager - Swallows,
Sampford Arundel 01823 672342 Mon/Tuesday.
Stawley Under Fives 07707 416871 Weds/Thurs/Fri

Parish News information

The Editors and the next issue deadline date are on the back cover. Please send items for publication to the Editors in good time to ensure publication. There is only a short time between the deadline and the printing of the Parish News and late items may not be included. Please send items for publication by email *ashparishnews@gmail.com* preferably as attachments in Microsoft 'Word' format.

Advertising Our rates are £2.00 per month for a small box, £4.00 for a quarter page, £8.00 for a half page and £16.00 for a whole page. Advertising for community events, charity and church fundraising events in our area are normally carried free of charge. Occasional one-off adverts from residents in our area seeking to sell or buy an article or seeking to acquire or offer a service are also carried free of charge. In all cases the style, layout and size allocated to an advert is at the discretion of the Editors.

Editors: Maurice Stanbury 01823 672216 and Avril Silk 01823 672131; e-mail address:
ashparishnews@gmail.com

Treasurer: Andrew Millard, Barton Barn, Kittisford, Wellington TA21 0RZ

Bank details: Account Name: The Parish News, Sort Code: 30-98-45. Acc. no. 01828373

Distribution: Pat Sweet 01823 672380

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

April

1st and 15th	10.00 - 12.30 pm	Books, Biscuits, Coffee and Cakes at Stawley Mill
16th	10.00 - 12.00 noon	Spring Coffee Morning at the Old Rectory, Stawley
18th	10.00 - 12 noon	Coffee, Cake and Chat in Ashbrittle Village Hall
19th	9.00 - 12 noon	St George's Day Breakfast in Appley Pavilion
30th	12 noon	Lunch Club in Ashbrittle Village Hall

May

14th		Appley Pavilion - Annual General Meeting
16th	Gates open 2.30 pm	Bathealton Plant Sale at Hellings Farm
16th	6.00 pm	Safari Supper in Kittisford

June

6th		Stawley Church Garden Party and Fete
6th and 7th		Open Gardens and Arts weekend for Wivey Cares
20th		Walk West Tone 2026 Details at westtone.org.uk/walk

September

6th		Stawley Flower and Produce Show
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Artists always Wanted! Do you have a painting or photograph which could be used as a cover design for the Parish News? Seasonal and local images are particularly welcome. Please send hi-res images (300dpi) to Avril at AvrilSilk@aol.com Portrait format is ideal if possible.



The Stawley School photograph, circa 1983, including pupils, teachers, support staff, parents and governors. The recently demolished classrooms can be seen in the background. The photograph and names were kindly provided by John Hannon - see the list of names on page 14. How many do you recognise?

Next Deadline Date: Friday 24th April 2026

Editors: Maurice and Avril